

# COUNTY OF PLACER Community Development Resource Agency

Michael J. Johnson, Agency Director

**PLANNING** 

**HEARING DATE:** February 17, 2011

ITEM NO.: 1

**TIME:** 10:05 am

TO:

Placer County Planning Commission

FROM:

**Environmental Review Committee** 

DATE:

February 17, 2011

SUBJECT:

Draft EIR/EIS Public Hearing to Accept Comments (PEIR 20080052)

Homewood Mountain Resort Ski Area Master Plan

**Community Enhancement Project** 

**GENERAL PLAN: West Shore** 

**ZONING:** Plan Area Statement 157 "Homewood/Ski Homewood Area" and Plan Area Statement 159 "Homewood Commercial"

**ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBERS:** 097-050-082, 097-050-083, 097-050-087, 097-050-050, 097-050-084, 097-050-053, 097-050-086, 097-050-085, 097-050-091, 097-050-092, 097-060-036, 097-060-035, 097-060-023, 097-060-016, 097-060-020, 097-050-058, 097-060-024, 097-140-003, 097-140-033, 097-130-034, 097-050-059, 097-050-090, 097-060-032, 097-050-068, 097-050-076, 097-050-079, 097-050-069, 097-050-071, 097-050-070, 097-210-024, 097-170-013, 097-050-072, 097-050-045, 097-050-057, 097-050-055, 097-050-066, 097-050-067, 097-050-034, 097-050-089, 097-060-031, 097-050-088, 097-060-030, 097-050-073, 097-060-029

STAFF PLANNER: Allen Breuch, Supervising Planner

**LOCATION:** Homewood Mountain Resort, 5145 West Lake Blvd. is located on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe approximately 19 miles north of South Lake Tahoe and 5 miles south of Tahoe City along West Lake Blvd.

APPLICANT: Art Chapman and David Tirman on behalf of JMA Ventures

PROPOSAL: The Homewood Mountain Resort Ski Area Master Plan Community Enhancement Project is a redevelopment of the existing ski resort. The Master Plan will include the development and upgrading of the North and South Base existing facilities, as well as a new mid-mountain lodge and support facilities. The proposed project will be a phased development that will start at the North Base (approximately 17 acres of land) where the existing site improvements will be removed and replaced with six (6) structures including underground parking, a 5-star boutique hotel with 75 rooms, approximately 60 fractional timeshare units, a total of 135 Tourist Accommodation Units, and approximately 82 individually owned residential units with 13 employee housing units on a free standing parking garage. On the street level the project proposes a mixture of commercial uses that include a lodge with restaurant, spa and fitness facility, and ice ring. The first phase of development also includes an extension of the existing Homewood gondola to the proposed mid-mountain lodge and ski maintenance facility. The South Base project (approximately 6 acres of land) include three

structures with 99 individually owned condominium suites and the continuation of Tahoe Ski Bowl Way.

#### DRAFT EIR HEARING OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE:

The 60-day public review period of the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS) ends March 21, 2011 and a public hearing to provides comments on the document has been scheduled during the review period. It is important to note that the purpose of this hearing is to receive comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. This hearing is not an opportunity to discuss the merits of the project, which will occur at a subsequent hearing on the project's entitlement. The County's environmental consultant will be present at the meeting to record comments and answer questions regarding the analysis contained in the Draft EIR/EIS.

All parties who attend the Planning Commission hearing on the Draft EIR/EIS and provide verbal or written comments will receive a written "Response to Comments" that is contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report /Environmental Impact Statement. These same persons will also receive notification of the subsequent hearing to be held on the discretionary permit application.

PUBLIC NOTICES AND REFERRAL FOR COMMENTS: Public notices were mailed to property owners of record within 300 feet of the project site. A public hearing notice was also published in the Sacramento Bee, Sierra Sun and Tahoe Daily Tribune newspapers on January 21, 2011. Community Development Resource Agency staff and the Departments of Public Works, Environmental Health, Air Pollution Control District and North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council (NTRAC) and as well as other interested parties were transmitted copies of the DEIR/EIS for review and comment. The public has until March 21, 2011 to submit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS).

#### **BACKGROUND:**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15087 (i), Public Review of Draft Environmental Impact Report, states: "Public hearings may be conducted on the environmental documents, either in separate proceedings or in conjunction with other proceedings of the public agency. Public hearings are encouraged...as part of the CEQA process."

As one of many steps identified to improve the County's environmental review process and to encourage community involvement on projects that require EIRs, the County implemented a procedure to provide the public earlier opportunities to comment on these projects. The County typically circulates the Draft EIR for a minimum 45-day public review period and schedules a public hearing during this review period. This EIR/EIS is a joint document with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and will include a 60-day public review period. The principal purpose of this hearing is to allow the public an opportunity to provide verbal comments on the Draft EIR/EIS and to direct questions to staff and the environmental consultant before the document has been completed. This process is consistent with many jurisdictions throughout the State who regularly conduct hearings for this purpose.

#### AREAS OF CONTROVERSY:

The Draft EIR/EIS is required to identify "areas of controversy" that include issues raised by the public and by public agencies in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and the Notice of Availability (NOA) process. The potential areas of controversy for the Homewood Master Plan project that were identified during this process include:

- Land use incompatibility due to the density of the proposed Master Plan and new residential subdivision relative to surrounding development and its proximity to existing residences;
- Employee housing demands
- Impacts to biological resources

- Potential disturbance or destruction of cultural resources on the project site
- Impacts to visual resources, including light and glare impacts
- Increased traffic and congestion in the vicinity of the project
- Air quality impacts
- Increase in noise
- Impacts to soils, geology and seismicity
- Water quality impacts during and after project construction
- Increased demand to public service and utilities
- Increase of hazardous materials and public safety
- Impacts to climate change

#### **SUMMARY OF MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:**

Provided below is an overview of each of the environmental sections contained within the Draft EIR/EIS that includes a project description and/or background information, the significant potential project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts and the mitigation measures developed to reduce these impacts where feasible. This staff report has been written to provide information about these environmental issues that are addressed in the Draft EIR/EIS; the staff report, however, does not provide a discussion or analysis of these issues.

#### Land Use

The existing Homewood Mountain Resort site is located within the boundaries of the West Shore General Plan and is designated for ski area with support downhill skiing and commercial uses. The site is zoned Plan Area Statement 157 "Homewood/Ski Homewood Area and 159 "Homewood Commercial." The subject property is an active ski resort that opened in 1962 and currently has eight (8) ski lifts and a full complement of 62 ski runs from beginner to advance. Surrounding the site is a mixture of residential subdivisions, small commercial uses, and two marinas (Obexter's and High and Dry). Residential lot sizes in the neighborhood primarily range from 10,000 to 25,000 square feet. The Homewood Mountain Resort includes 20 parcels with a combined area of 1,253.23 acres.

The project proposes subdividing property to create nine lots between 44,708 square feet and 8.48 acres in area along with the development of individually owned condominium units. The residential use component will require an amendment to the Plan Area Statement to allow the proposed density and multi-family uses.

#### Housing

The proposed project is anticipated to generate 182 new full time equivalent (FTE's) employees at the completion of the project. The applicant proposes to have 13 employee housing units on-site to house 26 FTE's with the remaining housing units to be mitigated through the development of a detailed "Homewood Employee/Workforce Housing Plan." The plan shall provide for a final number of new FTE's expected to be created with the identified phasing, the number, locations, for at least half of the expected new FTE's generated. By implementation of the housing plan it will ensure that sufficient employee workforce housing is provided on-site and/or off-site for at least half (91 FTE) of the expected employee/workforce housing.

#### Biological

The Biological Resources chapter evaluated the biological resources known to occur or potentially occur with the proposed project site. The chapter describes potential impacts to the resources and identifies measures to eliminate or substantially reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. The Biological Resources chapter is based on several reports prepared by Sue Fox, Wildlife Resources Consultants and Catherine Schnurrenberger, Tallic Applied Ecology/Design Integrated Environmental.

The biological resources chapter concluded that impacts related conflicts with local policies and ordinances regarding protection of natural resources would be significant. The following impacts were identified as potentially significant: impacts to wildlife habitat, wetlands, bat roosting, raptors and migratory bird species, possible special-status bat species, and jurisdictional waters or other waters of the U.S. Implementation of mitigation measures included in the Draft EIR/EIS, as well as compliance with applicable goals and policies in the Placer County and the West Shore General Plan, would reduce the project's biological impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation measures for biological impacts also require pre-construction surveys for the American pine marten, bald eagle, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Sierra Nevada red fox, and California wolverine prior to project construction. If these special species are found to present, mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

The Homewood ski facility is crossed by three perennial streams, Madden creek, Homewood Canyon (Ellis) Creek and Quail Creek and one unnamed ephemeral stream that generally drains from east to west into Lake Tahoe. Other hydrologic features on the site include smaller streams, seasonal wetlands and two lakes (Louise Lake and Quail Lake). The South Base project includes the removal of an existing culvert under Ski Bowl Way that will be replaced with a bridge and includes mitigation in the form of restoration of riparian vegetation along the creek.

#### Cultural Resources

A cultural resource study was completed for the project and did not identify any cultural resources eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources. Accordingly, there are no significant impacts to cultural resources that need to be mitigated. However, there may be resources that are buried on the site that could be unearthed during development activities.

If any archaeological artifacts, exotic rock (non-native), or unusual amounts of shell or bone are uncovered during any on-site construction activities, all work must stop immediately in the area and a qualified archaeologist retained to evaluate the deposit. If the discovery consists of human remains, the Placer County Coroner and Native American Heritage Commission must also be contacted. Work in the area may only proceed after authorization is granted by the Planning Services Division. With the above mitigation measure, impacts to cultural resources were found to be less than significant.

#### Visual Resources

The Visual Resources chapter analyzed the visual impacts relating to the removal of the existing North Base improvements which include parking lots, several buildings and ski lifts with the replacement of a mixed-use village with small scale commercial uses, a hotel and residential units. A new ski gondola is also proposed at the North Base of the development to the mid-mountain area where a new restaurant will replace the existing membrane structure. The South Base project results in the removal of the lodge facility and ski maintenance facility with the replacement of residential units within three new buildings. Although the change in scenic quality is identified as a potentially significant impact, mitigation measures have been incorporated in the Draft EIR/EIS to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

In addition, the project will be required to comply with the Zoning Ordinance and West Shore General Plan requirements will be required to demonstrate consistency with the Placer County North Tahoe Design Guidelines. This review will consider the location of building footprints, building elevations, lighting, landscaping and irrigation, and snow storage and will be required prior to the issuance of grading and building permits.

#### Transportation, Circulation, and Parking

The Homewood Master Plan project is located on the west side of State Route 89 (West Lake Boulevard) in the Lake Tahoe area, approximately five miles south of State Route 89 and State Route 28. State Route 89 is a one-lane Highway that extends from Tahoe City to the north and the City of South Lake Tahoe to the south. Other roadways in the vicinity include Tahoe Ski Bowl, Fawn and Silver Streets which intersects Highway 89.

Development of the project would generate new vehicle trips and potentially impact traffic operations on nearby roads and at nearby intersections. The number of vehicle trips that are expected to be generated by the proposed development was estimated using typical trip generation rates for single and condominium residential units, commercial uses, hotel/motels, day skiers, and employee housing within the project study area by Fehr and Peers. It is estimated that the project will generate 1,466 "Total Net New External Roadway Trips" per day. Of that total, an estimated 176 trips would be generated during the PM peak hour.

The traffic study completed for the project indicates that, under the existing plus project scenario, the incremental increase in traffic generated by the project would increase the Level of Service (LOS) standard for area intersections. Under the cumulative scenario, the LOS at the Granlibakken Road/State Route 89; and State Route 89 at Fanny Bridge will be impacted. The proposed mitigation for this impact is the fee payment of the project's proportional share of improvements at Granlibakken Road as well as payment of impact fees towards the Tahoe City bi-pass. However, this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

The proposed project will construct three primary on-site parking facilities. This includes below grade parking within the various buildings that house the north and south base uses. There is also an above surface three story parking garage that is part of the North Base project development. The above ground parking garage will incorporate 13 employee housing units. The Homewood Master Plan proposes a parking management plan that will consider on-site parking demand for the proposed units, commercial uses as well as day time skiers. Additional required parking is proposed by the applicant off-site as part of the parking management plan.

#### Air Quality

The proposed project is located in the eastern section of Placer County within the Lake Tahoe Air Basin of Placer County and is designated as non-attainment for ozone standards. The County's Air Pollution Control District has a 1991 Air Quality Attainment Plan that focuses on reducing the emissions of ozone precursors, reactive organic compounds (ROC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx).

The project related short and long term air pollutant emissions will result primarily from diesel-powered construction equipment, trucks hauling building supplies, vehicle exhaust, landscape maintenance equipment, water heater and air conditioning energy use.

In order to mitigate this impact, the project is required to prepare and submit a Construction Emission, Asbestos Dust, Fugitive Dust and Erosion Control Plan to the Placer County Air Pollution Control District for review and approval. All contractors will be required to maintain their construction equipment in accordance to the Plan. In addition, the applicant will implement an offsite mitigation program to reduce the project's contribution to significant air quality impacts occurring within Placer County.

#### Noise

The project site is located in a relatively urban setting, approximately 5 miles south of the State Route 28 traffic corridor on State Route 89. The existing noise sources associated with the project include automobile traffic, snowmaking, and occasional outdoor concerts. J.C. Brennan and

Associates conducted ambient noise monitoring for existing conditions with and without snow making at various locations around the project.

The single-family residences that surround the project represent the noise sensitive land uses in the vicinity. With the implementation of the mitigation measures provided in the Draft EIR/EIR, noise impacts would reduced to a less-than-significant level. Cumulative impacts associated with an increase in noise levels in the project vicinity were determined to also be less-than-significant.

The Noise chapter also reviewed a temporary increase in the ambient noise levels from the site preparation and construction activities (e.g., clearing, excavating, grading, etc.). This will be mitigated through limiting the days and hours allowed for construction and through equipment maintenance. The method by which the potential impacts are analyzed is discussed in the Draft EIR/EIS, followed by the identification of potential impacts and the recommended mitigation measures designed to reduce significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

#### Geology, Soils and Seismicity

The subject property consists primarily of steep slopes with elevations ranging from 7,880 feet to 6,225 feet above mean sea level. Site topography within the proposed resort area consists of moderate slope with gradients ranging from about 10-15 percent with some areas experiencing vertical drops.

The Soils, Geology, and Seismicity chapter is based on reports prepared by Klienfielder which showed potential environmental impacts associated with erosion due to the amount of earthwork and construction on potentially hazardous slopes. The mitigation measures proposed for this project include compliance with the County's Grading Ordinance and the preparation of an erosion control/winterization plan, a drainage report, a geotechnical report, and improvement plans.

The chapter also describes the geologic and soil characteristics of the project site and evaluates the extent to which implementation of the proposed project could be affected by seismic hazards such as ground shaking, liquefaction, and expansive soil characteristics. The report concluded that the following impacts were identified as potentially significant: risks to people and structures associated with seismic activity, including surface rupture, slope instability, and/or landslides, risks associated with erosion and/or sedimentation, loss of structural support due to liquefaction, and damage from expansive soils on-site.

The Klienfilder report identified two unnamed faults that run through the project site from north to south. A subsequent analysis completed in 2010 by Holdredge and Kull determined that hazard from surface rupture on the unnamed faults as low. None the less, there are mitigation measures that require soils and geotechnical engineering reports to ensure no structures are built on active fault areas.

The construction of the proposed project will result in disturbance of approximately 40 acres of land which includes roads and utility excavation, building envelops and offsite road and utility improvements. The North Base project proposes a subterranean garage that will cut into the mountain side. It is estimated that some of these cuts will be 40 feet in depth which will result in the interception of the water table. Because groundwater will be intercepted there is a mitigation measure requiring a final dewatering plan to be developed and approved showing the diversion and/or capturing the groundwater flows on-site during and after construction.

#### Hydrology and Water Quality

Project development would result in the alteration of the site's drainage patterns and could potentially increased storm water flows and potential impact water quality offsite. In order to mitigate this impact, the applicant shall prepare a final drainage report in conformance with the Land

Development Manual and the Placer County Storm Water Management Manual (SWMM). The report shall provide details on pre- and post-project watersheds, impacted drainages proposed onsite and offsite improvements and the identification of new drainage facilities or improvements to existing facilities. In order to ensure that impacts to downstream areas will be minimized, the project will comply with the Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's SWMM and the Land Development Manual for the design and construction of storm drainage systems.

In order to obtain coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), the project will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that will be designed to eliminate pollutant discharges to surface waters. Post-construction storm water runoff from the proposed project could potentially contain urban contaminants that could degrade water quality. The applicant will prepare a post-development Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) that will be implemented by a future the Homeowner's Association.

#### Public Services and Utilities

Domestic water supply is provided by the Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) that primarily serves the South Base project and the Madden Creek Private Water Company that serves the mid mountain and North Base project. The Truckee-Tahoe Sanitation District (T-TSD) is the service provider for waste water treatment facilities. Fire protection services are provided by the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District in the urban area of the project and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) in the non urbanized areas. Law enforcement is provided by Placer County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement. Tahoe Truckee School District provides serves for elementary through High School grades; Sierra Pacific Power Company, AT&T, Southwest Gas, and Charter Media for electrical telephone services natural gas services, and cable television services. Parks services are provided by the Placer County Department of Facility Services.

The Draft EIR/EIS identified potentially significant impacts in the areas of water supply infrastructure, the wastewater conveyance system, increased demands on fire protection services, exposure of people or structures to wildland fires, increased student enrollment and increased demand for park and recreation facilities. Mitigation measures to reduce these potential impacts to less than significant include:

Water supply and infrastructure impacts – A water supply assessment was provided in the EIR/EIS that demonstrates the adequacy of the proposed water pipelines and water distribution system for the project. Also, water conservation measures, such as water-efficient designs in the project landscaping and irrigation.

Fire protection services/exposure of people or structures to Wildland fires impacts - The project will obtain a "will serve" letter from North Tahoe Fire Protection District. A Benefit Assessment Fee will be paid to fund the project's fair share of capital costs for providing fire services to the site.

Increased student enrollment impacts – School fees will be paid prior to the issuance of residential building permits.

Park and recreation facilities impacts – The project applicant will pay park dedication fees for each residential unit and the project.

#### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project site has supported commercial and industrial development in the past and there is evidence that hazardous materials were used or stored on the site. A Phase One environmental site assessment was conducted by Robison Engineering Company on December 2005, but did not note any improper use or storage of materials or negative impacts.

Project development would require the storage, use and handling of various hazardous materials such as gasoline, diesel fuels, oils, plaster, cement, herbicides, etc. In order to mitigate this impact, Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be implemented during all phases of construction on the project site. These BMPs include, but are not limited to, proper storage techniques, employee training, separate storage of recyclable construction materials, storing hazardous materials in portable metal sheds with secondary containment and contracting with a certified waste collection contractor to collect and remove hazardous wastes.

#### Climate Change

In order to mitigate for the projects impact on global climate change, the project will implement numerous design features to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Even with the use of energy efficient appliances, renewable energy, water conservation and efficiency, and solid waste measures the cumulative impact to climate change is significant and unavoidable.

#### **Cumulative Impacts:**

The Homewood Master Plan DEIR/EIS includes mitigation measures to reduce most project-specific impacts to a less than significant level. The DEIR/EIS also identifies impacts will be cumulatively significant as a result of the build out of the Plan's land use diagram. These cumulatively signifigant impacts include land use, biological resources, visual resources, transportation and circulation, global warming, noise, soil, geology and seismicity, hydrology and water quality, public services and utilities and air quality.

#### **Growth-Inducing Impact:**

Growth can be induced in a number of ways, such as through the elimination of obstacles to growth, through the stimulation of economic activity within the region, or through the establishment of policies or other precedents that directly or indirectly encourage additional growth. The redevelopment of the existing ski facility will include new condominiums, tourist accommodation units, and commercial floor space. The proposed project would, therefore, directly add population and employees to the project area by construction of these new units and commercial buildings.

#### Significant Unavoidable Environmental Impacts:

Implementation of the proposed project would result in significant unavoidable impacts to:

- 1) Transportation systems, including transportation and circulation;
- 2) Cumulative impacts to transportation and circulation;
- 3) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- 4) Conflict with applicable plan policy or regulations of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of Greenhouse Gasses.

#### Alternatives:

The Draft EIR/EIS provides a discussion and comparison of six project alternatives: Alternative 1 is the proposed project. Alternative 2 is the no project alternative where the resort will continue to be operate under existing conditions. Alternative 3 is the no code amendment to TRPA building height alternative that includes the proposed uses identified under the proposed project Alternative 1 with larger building footprints. Alternative 4 is the alternative that closes the ski resort and creates 16 estate residential lots and one commercial lot. Alternative 5 is compact project area alternative that would reduce the proposed project to 225 multi-family units, a 75 room hotel, and 25,000 square foot of commercial area. Alternative 6 is the reduced project alternative that would develop 75 tourist accommodation units, 195 for sale units, and 14 single-family lots. The Draft EIR/EIS provides additional detailed and qualitative discussion and analysis of the Alternatives. Chapter three in the DEIR/EIS provides the alternative descriptions.

#### Time Frames:

The 60-day public comment period for the Homewood Mountain Resort Master Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement will close at 5:00 PM on March 21, 2011. It is anticipated that the Homewood Master Plan project could be before the Planning Commission for hearing on entitlements recommendations and amendments in late spring and early fall before the Board of Supervisors.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Environmental Review Committee recommends the Planning Commission receive public comments on the Draft EIR/EIS and direct staff to respond to all written and oral comments in the Final EIR/EIS.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Breuch, Chairperson

**Environmental Review Committee** 

#### ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Vicinity Map

Attachment B - Site Plan (Proposed Project)

Homewood Master Plan Draft EIR/EIS (previously distributed on January 21, 2011)

cc: Art Chapman and David Teirman, JMA - Applicant

Michael J Johnson - CDRA Director

Paul Thompson - Deputy Planning Director

Scott Finley - County Counsel's Office

Yu Shuo Chang - Air Pollution Control District

Rebecca Taber - Engineering and Surveying Department

Andrew Gaber - Department of Public Works

Mohan Ganapathy - Environmental Health Services

Andy Fisher - Parks Department

Allen Breuch - Supervising Planner

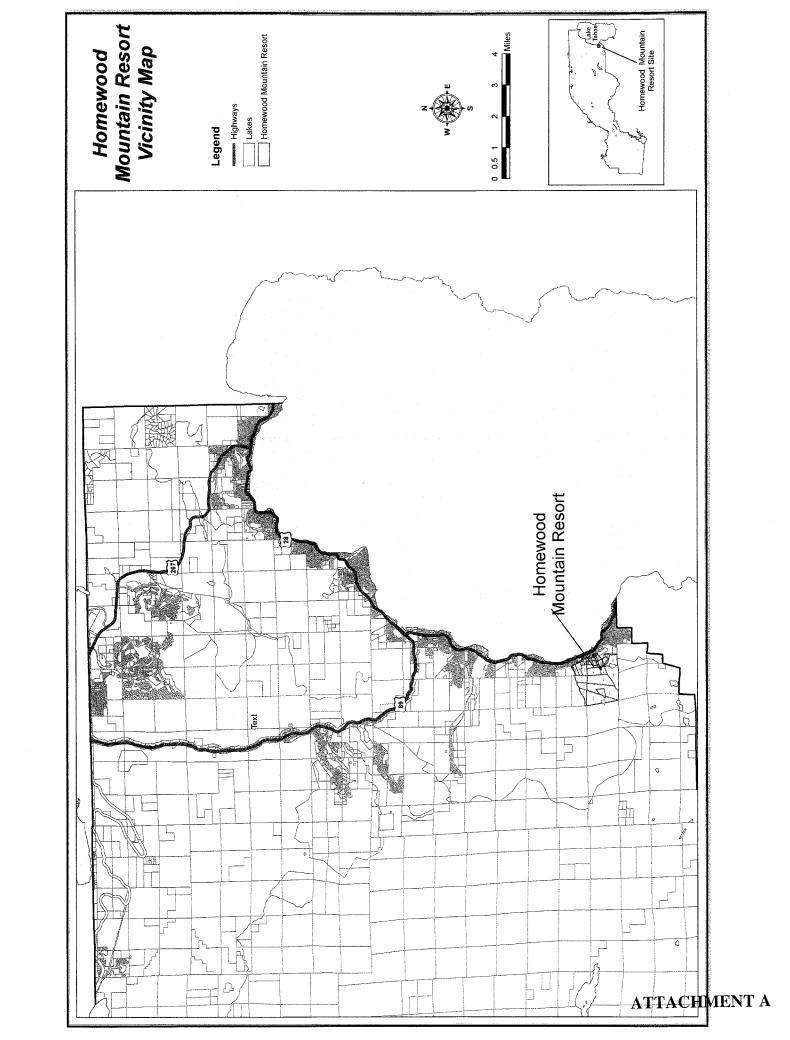
Mike Wells - Environmental Coordination Services

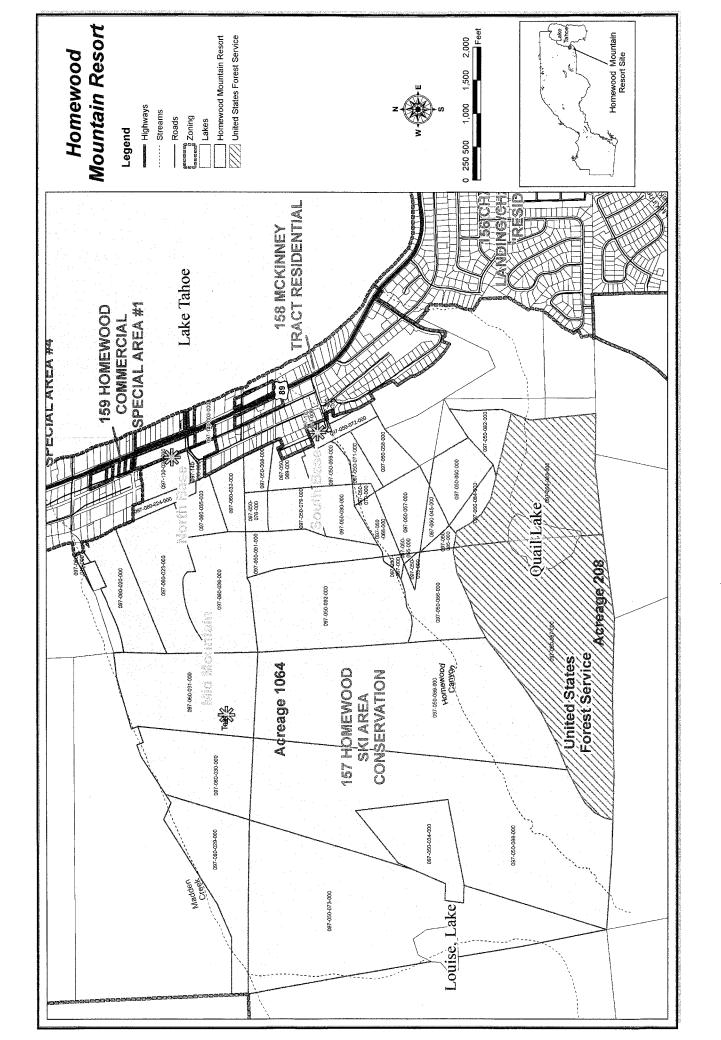
Jerry Wells – TRPA Deputy Director

David Landry-TRPA Project Planner

Subject/chrono files

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## Proposed Project (Alternative 1) Overall Site Plan

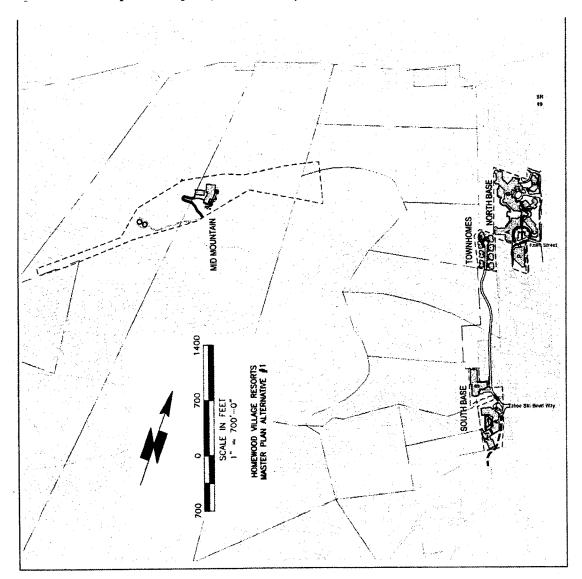
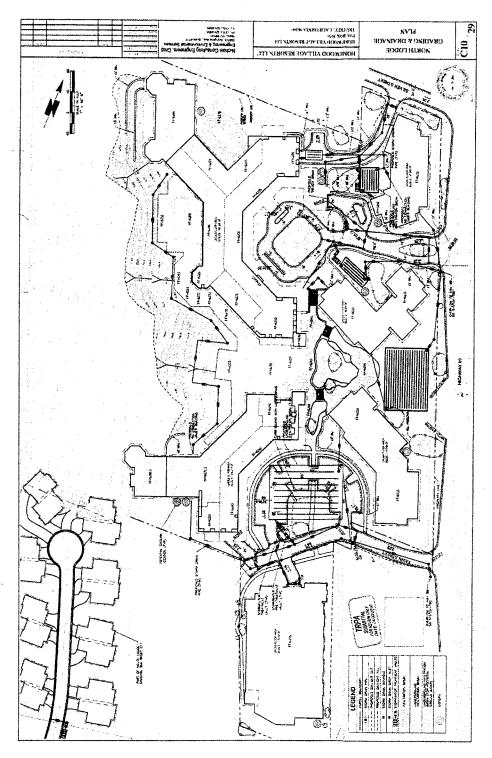
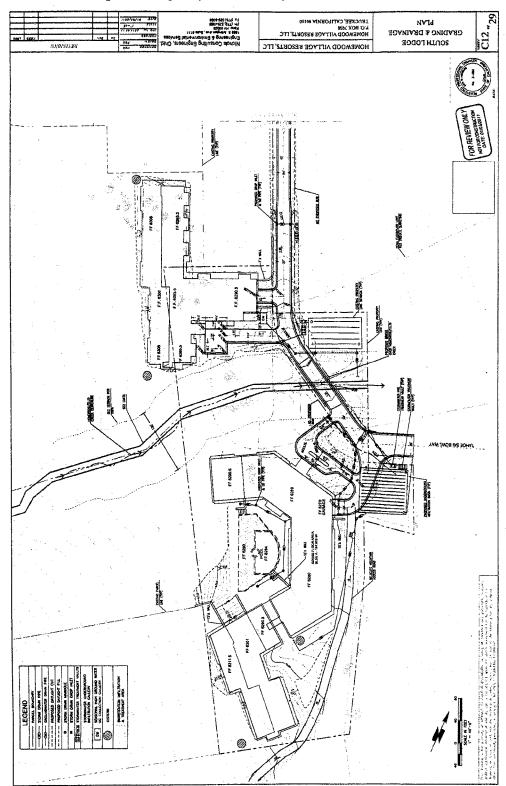


Figure 3-8 Proposed Project (Alternative 1) North Base Area Site Plan



### Proposed Project (Alternative 1) South Base Area Site



HOMEWOOD MOUNTAIN RESORT SKI AREA MASTER PLAN FIR/FIS

## Proposed Project (Alternative 1) Mid-Mountain Area Site Plan

